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RUEHKV/AMEMBASSY KYIV PRIORITY 0183  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 8229  
RUEHSF/AMEMBASSY SOFIA PRIORITY 0301  
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TBILISI 000339

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/19/2019

TAGS: PREL PGOV GG

SUBJECT: GEORGIA: REQUEST FOR GUIDANCE ON BLACK SEA DEFENSE  
MINISTERIAL

REF: A. A. EMAIL TO EUR/CARC 2/19  
B. B. TBILISI 223

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. KENT LOGSDON FOR REASONS 1.4. (b)  
AND (d).

¶11. (U) This is an action request - see paragraph 6.

¶12. (C) Deputy Minister of Defense Giorgi Muchaidze called in Embassy Tbilisi's Defense Attaché and Pol-Econ Chief to consult on Georgia's response to an invitation from the Turks for Georgia's Minister of Defense to participate in a Black Sea Defense Ministerial (BSDM) on March 25-27. Muchaidze told Emboffs that Georgia was considering declining the invitation since recent Stability Platform talks hosted by the Turks had not provided a useful forum, but sought U.S. views on the proposed ministerial. Embassy requests guidance to respond to the Georgians' request (paragraph 4).

¶13. (C) Deputy Minister of Defense Muchaidze said that he was seeking U.S. views on Georgia's participation in the BSDM as part of an ongoing effort to increase collaboration following the signing of the U.S.-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership. Muchaidze provided a copy of the invitation sent from the Turkish Minister of Defense, which included a draft statement that the hosts intend to be signed by the Ministers. (Note: these documents have been emailed to EUR/CARC. End Note.)

¶14. (C) Muchaidze expressed concern about Turkey's efforts to increase its role in the region and its efforts to develop fora which excluded the United States. He suggested to EmbOffs that recent Stability Platform talks (reftel B) had yielded little of interest for Georgia. He said that he was inclined to recommend that Georgia not attend at any level. Muchaidze told us that he was unaware if Bulgaria or Romania would attend and what their governments' views of the proposed ministerial might be. He said he was in the process of consulting with Sofia and Bucharest.

¶15. (C) Comment. Emboffs told Muchaidze they would seek guidance from Washington. Although post understands Tbilisi's reluctance, post also sees potential problems should Georgia be the only Black Sea nation not to participate in the BDSM. In post's view, Georgia's participation could lead to benefits in terms of any conclusions or documents which could be issued and may not want to be seen as refusing to cooperate.

¶16. (C) Action request. Post requests guidance on responding to the Deputy Minister.

LOGSDON